

# The Big 5

THINGS YOU CAN DO FOR  
BETTER MENTAL HEALTH

Research has shown there are five types of actions that are strongly linked to good mental health. We call these 'The Big 5' and we know that doing them regularly can help us thrive and bounce back from challenges.

We believe that everyone should know about The Big 5 — that's how big of a difference they can make to our mental health. These building blocks for good mental health are:



## 1. Meaningful Activities

Actions which give us a sense of joy, accomplishment and satisfaction. They can be small things, like listening to a favourite song or watching a good show, and they are often fun to do.



## 2. Healthy Thinking

Having realistic thoughts about ourselves, the world and the future. This means keeping perspective and treating ourselves with respect and kindness, particularly when things are difficult.



## 3. Goals and Plans

These energise and motivate us. Planning gives us something to look forward to and stops us from dwelling on past problems.



## 4. Healthy Routines

These are the things we do automatically, like going to sleep and waking up at the same time, which set us up for the day. Other important routines include those linked to our roles and relationships.



## 5. Social Connections

Staying bonded to our family, friends or tribe. Regular contact with people we love and value helps us feel validated/ part of a community.

# The Big 5 Self-Assessment Sheet

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



- This Planning Sheet contains five types of activities, which are strongly linked to mental health
- We have listed three examples for each of these areas
- Tick the column which best matches how often you did this type of activity in the past week
- If any of your answers are in the yellow or red section, check the next column to get some ideas about how you might do them more often

THE BIG 5	EXAMPLES	HOW OFTEN DID YOU DO THESE EACH WEEK?					SUGGESTIONS
		Every day	5-6 times per week	3-4 times per week	1-2 times per week	Never	
<b>1. Meaningful Activities</b> 	I did something enjoyable						Take at least 10 minutes each day to enjoy a favourite piece of music, a TV show, nature or a book
	I spent time doing something I believed in						Make a list of the simple things you used to enjoy doing and start to re-engage with that hobby or activity
	I did something that was very satisfying to me						Find activities that align with your values, including doing things for the community, friends, family, pets, or environment
<b>2. Healthy Thinking</b> 	I allowed myself to be less than perfect						Practice accepting that making mistakes is normal and not a sign of weakness
	I stopped myself from thinking unhelpful or unrealistic thoughts						Check, are your thoughts overly self-critical or are you expecting too much from yourself or others?
	I treated myself with respect						Check, are you treating yourself in the same way that you would treat others?
<b>3. Goals and Plans</b> 	I set realistic and achievable goals						Make a simple plan each day listing the things you will achieve
	I did something to help me achieve my goals						Use an online calendar or notebook to help remind you of your goals and plans
	I made a plan and stuck to it						Accept that some days you won't achieve all your goals, but commit to trying to complete them in coming days
<b>4. Healthy Routines</b> 	I went to bed and woke up at a regular time						Create a relaxing bedtime routine to help you settle at night and get up at a regular time each morning
	I kept a healthy daily routine						Start to take a short (or longer) walk each day
	I prepared and ate a healthy meal						Add a bit more fruit and veggies to your daily diet
<b>5. Social Connections</b> 	I socialised with positive people						Make a list of the people you care about, then select three you will talk to each week
	I had a meaningful conversation with someone						Think about what you want to talk about and to whom
	I talked about my day with a friend or family member						Make a regular time each week to talk to someone you care about